What is
talent
recruitment?

recruitment | attrition | motivation

Talent attraction and recruitment is the first step in identifying, screening, and selecting talent for a particular job role in Social Purpose Organisations (SPOs). Effective recruitment strategies bring the right candidate on board so that the effectiveness and performance of the SPO is enhanced. Conversely, when SPOs do not find the right candidate, they prefer not to hire, worrying that a wrong hire might negatively affect the organisation.

What factors affect talent recruitment in the social sector?

Factors that affect talent recruitment in the social sector are as follows:

Experience over qualification

The type and length of experience affects social sector workers' decision-making, motivations, expectations, and actions. Years of experience reflect specialisation in a particular area in some SPOs, while experience also testifies talent motivation and action.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in recruitment

SPOs prioritise DEI, while not compromising on quality of talent and following stringent screening processes and filters. Also, gender inclusion is given due consideration while bringing talent on board. SPOs avoid conflict of interest and seek full disclosure by candidates on acquaintances in the organisation.

Role Suitability in terms of core skills and competencies

A carefully considered employer brand and personnel value proposition are essential to attract quality talent. In some cases, potential talent pools are incentivised with unique opportunities for further learning and specialisation at the time of recruitment, enabling a long term, systemic perspective on nurturing and finding the appropriate talent.

Cultural fitment and purpose alignment

These are primary recruitment requirements in the social sector. SPOs often invest in extended recruitment processes to ensure cultural fitment and purpose alignment with incoming talent.

Brand value

The brand value of an organisation affects the motivation of talent to work for the organisation. SPOs with lower brand value experience challenges in talent attraction and recruitment.

Expectation alignment on compensation

The altruistic narrative often dominates the compensation expectations and engagement levels of individuals working in SPOs. However, compensation plays a critical role in recruiting appropriate talent, and a lack of it may lead to employee dissatisfaction.

What is attrition, and what are some of its reasons in the social sector?

Attrition can be broadly defined as the exit of employees from an organisation.
The attrition in SPOs is both voluntary and involuntary.

The reasons for voluntary attrition include the following:

> **uncompetitive pay perks** → **misalignment with organisational mission** → **burning out** → **talent's career aspirations and better work opportunities** → **conflicting relations with managers within the organisation**

On the other hand, project completion and termination on disciplinary grounds are causes of involuntary attrition. Roles centred around direct service and support see a higher turnover than professional roles.

Strategies to reduce talent attrition and improve retention

Learning and Development (L&D)

Conscious investments in L&D practices for effective talent transitions, and nurturing a distributed leadership model are two key strategies for talent retention. Organisation leaders help in talent management by training new and existing personnel.

Compensation negotiations

To retain their valuable employees, organisations negotiate by offering competitive salaries. However, this strategy may not always work and largely depends on the candidate's personal motivation and the compensation being offered at other organisations.

Displaying task significance

Organisations try to convince the talent leaving the organisation of the purpose and meaning towards which they are working.
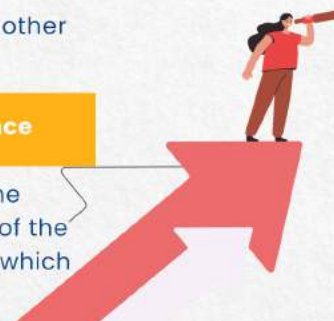
Job enrichment & enlargement

These are effective strategies often employed by smaller organisations to keep personnel motivated and enable talent transitions towards building resilience in difficult times. Such strategies create opportunities for people to take up additional responsibilities and more complex roles in the organisation.

Career growth trajectory

This is regarded as crucial to talent retention as every individual is thought to foresee a personal growth path in the organisation. Considering this need, most SPOs have well-established career trajectories.

Job rotation and growth

Opportunities for job rotation, leading or working on collaborative projects (within and outside agencies) keep personnel motivated and ensure retention. Such capabilities are nurtured in organisations through conscious investments towards enabling a structured, peer-learning environment.

Improved communication

Open communication enables and improves the quality of interaction amongst peers and collaborators, providing space for discussing future career paths. Motivation derived from a strong alignment with organisational purpose and conducive organisational cultures are key factors that inspire talent to retain their engagement levels.

How do we define motivation?

Motivation can be defined as the way in which urges, drives, desires, aspirations, strivings, or needs direct, control or explain the behaviours of human beings.

A number of **"pull"** and **"push"** factors can be identified as factors that affect the motivation of individuals to join and work in the social sector. **"Pull"** factors can be defined as factors that attract and motivate individuals to work in the social sector, while **"push"** factors are defined as constraints which may force individuals to join the social sector.

What "pull" factors attract individuals to work in the Indian social sector?

Intrinsic motivation

Non-profits attract people with a degree of internal motivation, based on factors including altruism, philanthropic and prosocial motivation, and factors such as pay and job security. Theoretically, intrinsic motivation leads to a higher probability of individuals with such qualities choosing the non-profit sector for work.

Shared vision

Shared visions of change create opportunities and inspire talent to engage with and contribute meaningfully to the social impact sector. The role of individual alignment with collective visions of change is a critical factor in motivating and retaining talent.

Meaningfulness of work

Purpose alignment between the individual and the organisation is essential for talent motivation. One of the key drivers of talent motivation is observing the positive effects on the lives of others, the lack of which may have a demotivating effect on the morale of employees. SPOs take initiatives like occasional field visits to partners' project implementation sites to boost motivation levels.

Leadership style

Leadership practice within an organisation is a critical factor influencing talent retention. An engaging and democratic form of leadership enables the organisation to demonstrate principles of equity, transparency and fairness in key structures and processes, including decision-making, compensation, design and maintenance of creative task expressions across talent segments.

Learning and development (L&D)

L&D and personal growth motivate individuals to continue with the organisation for longer, ensuring continuous engagement and retention. Such opportunities can even overcome the low compensation barrier to some extent.

Need Fulfilment

Fulfilment of individual needs—such as safety, love and belongingness, self-esteem and self-actualisation—can lead to higher productivity levels; higher levels of board engagement; and a willingness to explore to fulfil self-actualisation needs once the lower-level needs have been satisfied.

Organisation culture and work environment

Organisation culture and work environment have an immense effect on talent motivation. A warm, welcoming, and close-knit team culture where employees are allowed to express their areas of interest and opinions without any repercussions can motivate talent to continue working with the organisation.

Autonomy and voice

The ability to shape one's work and raise concerns invokes leadership traits and is a key motivating factor for talent. Autonomy gives the feeling of leading, driving change, and being accountable and trusted.

Diverse work opportunities

Assigning additional roles and responsibilities by giving personnel a position of power and authority—for example: posting personnel as team/project lead—inspires the respective talent segments to perform, engage and challenge themselves to go beyond their comfort zones. Supplementing these measures with the right amount of training to allow the individual to perform their best is essential.

Feedback

Enabling formative feedback loops for talent through continuous performance appraisals helps personnel develop higher agility towards learning. In addition, the inclusion of all personnel (employees, consultants and volunteers) in performance appraisals—so they may have the opportunity to outline areas of improvement or growth points for themselves—supports the creation of a homogenous culture in the organisation.

Well-being initiatives

When the organisation focuses on an individual's growth, safety and well-being through an empathetic approach, the personnel also develop a sense of belonging to the organisation. The empathetic approach also inspires reverse empathy and commitment from the personnel regarding organisational needs, vision and goals.

Organisational structure and processes

The organisation's horizontal structure allows employees to communicate seamlessly with their colleagues and provides safe spaces to voice concerns. Induction processes like the buddy system have been reported to motivate talent to continue working with an SPO.

Organisational values

Organisational values not only anchor the SPOs but also keep employees motivated and aligned. Organisational values have been reported to influence continuous talent engagement and retention with an SPO. However, it is unclear whether the talent and the organisation have a similar understanding of organisational values.

Opportunity to work with diverse stakeholders

The opportunity to work with peers and other stakeholders from diverse backgrounds motivates talent. A majority of SPOs are found to have diversity and inclusion as key organisational values that drive the entire Talent Management (TM) strategy.

Challenging work

The opportunity to address complex social issues and support other organisations to scale the impact and prospects of doing expansive work excites talent to join the social sector.

Skills match

SPO leaders noted that the match between their skill sets and the organisation's functional areas enables them to effectively contribute their knowledge to the organisation.

What are the "push" factors constraining individuals to work in the social sector?

Poor educational background, lack of work opportunities and desperation to earn a living are the push factors that may constrain individuals towards seeking work opportunities in the social sector.